

NOTICES OF HEARINGS/MEETINGS

COMMITTEE ON RULES AND ADMINISTRATION

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I wish to announce that the Committee on Rules and Administration will meet at 9:30 a.m., Tuesday, June 17, 2003, in Room 301 Russell Senate Office Building, to conduct a hearing on Senate Resolution 151, requiring public disclosure of notices of objections ("holds") to proceedings to motions or measures in the Senate.

For further information concerning this meeting, please contact Susan Wells at 202-224-6352.

COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE, NUTRITION, AND FORESTRY

Mr. McCAIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry be authorized to conduct a hearing during the session of the Senate on Thursday, June 12, 2003. The purpose of this hearing is to discuss the United States Department of Agriculture's implementation of the Agricultural Risk Protection Act of 2000 and related crop insurance issues.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

COMMITTEE ON BANKING, HOUSING, AND URBAN AFFAIRS

Mr. McCAIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on June 12, 2003, at 10:00 a.m. to conduct a hearing on "expanding homeownership opportunities."

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND TRANSPORTATION

Mr. McCAIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation be authorized to meet on Thursday, June 12, 2003, at 9:30 a.m. on Global Overfishing.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

Mr. McCAIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Finance be authorized to meet in open Executive Session during the session on Thursday, June 12, 2003, at 9:00 a.m., to consider an original bill entitled, The Prescription Drug and Medicare Improvement Act of 2003; to consider S. 312, "Availability of SCHIP Allotments for Fiscal Years 1998 through 2001".

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

Mr. McCAIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Foreign Relations be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Thursday, June 12, 2003, at 9:30 a.m., to hold a Hearing on Beyond Iraq: Repercussions of Iraq Stabilization and Reconstruction Policies.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

COMMITTEE ON HEALTH EDUCATION, LABOR, AND PENSIONS

Mr. McCAIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions be authorized to meet for a hearing on TWA/American Airline Workforce Integration during the session of the Senate on Thursday, June 12, 2003 at 2:00 p.m. in SD-430.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

Mr. McCAIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on the Judiciary be authorized to meet to conduct a markup on Thursday, June 12, 2003, at 9:30 a.m. in Dirksen Room 226.

AGENDA

I. Nominations: David G. Campbell to be U.S. District Judge for the District of Arizona; Thomas M. Hardiman to be U.S. District Judge for the Western District of Pennsylvania; Eduardo Aguirre, Jr., to be Director, Bureau of Citizenship and Immigration Services, U.S. Department of Homeland Security; Richard James O'Connell to be U.S. Marshal for the Western District of Arkansas.

II. Bills: S. 724, A bill to amend Title 18, United States Code, to exempt certain rocket propellants from prohibitions under that title on explosive materials. [Enzi, Craig, Durbin, Sessions]; S. 1125, Fairness in Asbestos Injury Resolution Act of 2003 ("The FAIR Act") [Hatch, DeWine, Chambliss]; S. Res. 141, A resolution recognizing "Inventing Flight: The Centennial Celebration," a celebration in Dayton, Ohio of the centennial of Wilbur and Orville Wright's first flight [Voinovich, DeWine]; H.R. 1954, Armed Forces Naturalization Act of 2003.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

SUBCOMMITTEE ON THE CONSTITUTION, CIVIL RIGHTS AND PROPERTY RIGHTS

Mr. McCAIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on the Judiciary Subcommittee on the Constitution, Civil Rights and Property Rights be authorized to meet to conduct a markup on Thursday, June 12, 2003, immediately following the Full Committee markup scheduled to begin at 9:30 a.m. in Dirksen Room 226.

AGENDA

Executive Business Meeting; Senate Judiciary Committee Subcommittee on the Constitution, Civil Rights & Property Rights; Thursday, June 12, 2003 9:30 a.m. (or, if a Full Committee markup is scheduled that morning, immediately following the Full Committee markup) Dirksen Senate Office Room 226.

I. Bill: S. J. Res. 1, A joint resolution proposing an amendment to the Constitution of the United States to protect the rights of crime victims. Note: As agreed by Senators CORNYN and FEINGOLD, only amendments circulated

to all other members of the subcommittee by 12:00 noon on Wednesday, June 11, 2003 shall be in order.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

SUBCOMMITTEE ON PUBLIC LANDS AND FORESTS

Mr. McCAIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Subcommittee on Public Lands and Forests of the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Thursday, June 12, at 2:30 p.m. in Room SD-366 to receive testimony on S. 434—a bill to authorize the Secretary of Agriculture to sell or exchange all or part of certain parcels of National Forest System land in the State of Idaho and use the proceeds derived from the sale or exchange for National Forest System resources; S. 435—a bill to provide for the conveyance by the Secretary of Agriculture of the Sandpoint Federal Building and adjacent land in Sandpoint, Idaho, and for other purposes; S. 490—a bill to direct the Secretary of Agriculture to convey certain land in the Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit Nevada, to the Secretary of the Interior, in trust for the Washoe Indian Tribe of Nevada and California; H.R. 762—to amend the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 and the Mineral Leasing Act and for other purposes; S. 1111—a bill to provide suitable grazing arrangements on National Forest System land to persons that hold a grazing permit adversely affected by the standards and guidelines contained in the record of decision of the Sierra Nevada Forest Plan Amendment and pertaining to the Willow Flycatcher and the Yosemite Toad; and H.R. 622—to provide for the exchange of certain lands in the Coconino and Tonto National Forests in Arizona, and for other purposes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

SUBCOMMITTEE ON SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, AND SPACE

Mr. McCAIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Subcommittee on Science, Technology, and Space be authorized to meet on Thursday, June 12, 2003, at 2:30 p.m. on Cloning.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

PRIVILEGE OF THE FLOOR

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that Peter Winokur, a fellow on my staff, be granted the privilege of the floor during the debate on the FAA reauthorization legislation.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. LOTT. I ask unanimous consent that staff member William Hunt in my office be granted the privilege of the floor during the consideration of S. 824.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST— NOMINATION OF MICHAEL GARCIA

Mr. McCONNELL. As in executive session, I ask unanimous consent that when the Governmental Affairs Committee reports the nomination of Michael Garcia (PN 451), to be Assistant Secretary of Homeland Security, the nomination then be sequentially referred to the Judiciary Committee for a period not to exceed 15 days of session; provided further that if the nomination is not reported by that time, the nomination be automatically discharged and placed on the calendar.

Mr. President, I withdraw that request.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The request is vitiated.

WOMEN'S BUSINESS CENTERS PRESERVATION ACT OF 2003

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of S. 1247.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The clerk will state the bill by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 1247) to increase the amount to be reserved during FY2003 for sustainability grants under section 29(1) of the Small Business Act.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

Ms. SNOWE. Mr. President, I rise in support of the "Women's Business Centers Preservation Act of 2003" in recognition of the critical need to preserve the operations of existing Women's Business Centers currently serving women entrepreneurs in almost every state and territory. I am pleased to be joined in offering this bill by Senator KERRY, Ranking Member, Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship, and Senators BOND, CANTWELL, BURNS, LEVIN, ENZI, GRASSLEY, BAUCUS, DOMENICI, and BINGAMAN.

While I am totally supportive of the Administration's efforts to add new centers to serve a broader constituency, I am very concerned that we may lose valuable resources established in rural and urban areas. The value of the Women's Business Center Program is stated best by the text taken from the Small Business Administration's (SBA) promotional materials on the Women's Business Center Program:

Each women's business center is uniquely designed to serve the needs of its individual community and to place special emphasis on helping those who are economically disadvantaged.

The Women's Business Center Program has become a strong and effective part of the SBA's entrepreneurial-development efforts.

And—

In tough economic times, when both employment and funding resources are harder to come by, support for the WBC Program is more important than ever.

As Chair of the Small Business Committee, I totally agree with the SBA's assessment. In fact, Congress has

agreed six times since the program was introduced through the Small Business Ownership Act of 1988, and made permanent in 1997, that this program is critical for women-business owners. The program's appropriations has grown from \$2 million in 1989 to \$12 million in 2003, and the results have been impressive. In Fiscal Year 2002, for every dollar invested in the program, centers reported a return of \$161 in gross receipts of clients.

Even more remarkable is the fact that since 1997, the Women's Business Centers have served more than 240,000 women entrepreneurs. In Fiscal Year 2002, almost 86,000 customers were served through the centers. As reported in the SBA Performance and Accountability Report of 2002, "the WBC Program has more than doubled its goal of a 3 percent annual increase in the number of clients served in the past two years. This is due in large part to the success of the sustainability grants, which enable established centers to continue SBA funding. SBA expects this trend to continue as more centers become firmly established and as their reputations for excellence spread."

If we look at the centers that are achieving the greatest impact, it is the established centers. The results of their outreach and one-on-one assistance has made it possible for the Small Business Administration to achieve its goals as it measures the success of the products and programs offered by these centers.

It is true that this month only five Women's Business Centers face the possibility of closing their doors without the dollar-to-dollar matching funds that are provided through sustainability funding. The sustainability grant provisions reserve 30.2 percent of the \$12 million program funding for sustainability grants for existing centers with the balance of available funds designated for the creation and operation of new centers. Based on information provided by the SBA, there are not sufficient sustainability reserve funds to offer continuation contracts to five centers in Iowa, Illinois, North Carolina, Texas and Washington. Therefore, SBA has proposed a reduction in grants for all centers currently funded by sustainability grants. By increasing the reserve amount to 36 percent, only during Fiscal Year 2003, adequate funds will be available for eligible existing centers operating with sustainability grants.

Next year, there will be more than 20 States and the U.S. Virgin Islands affected by the lack of funding to continue operations. Last month, I introduced the "Women's Small Business Programs Improvement Act of 2003", S. 1154, to correct deficiencies in the program and provide a fair, competitive process to operate and grow the Women's Business Center Program. I expect that bill will be taken up as part of the SBA reauthorization legislation my Committee will consider in July.

While we can fix the funding problem in the long-run, we still face a crisis

today. That is the reason for the bill I am introducing. By increasing the formula for sustainability grants from 30.2 percent to 36 percent, existing centers would be able to operate without disruption in funding and the programs and services currently offered in our communities. This provision will not require an additional appropriation, just a reallocation of current funds.

I believe this approach offers the best path available to sustain the centers approaching the end of their grant cycles without creating undue hardship for all existing centers. At the same time, it should not hinder the Administration's efforts to create new centers.

These centers have been extraordinarily successful in providing assistance to women in all walks of life—from those who once received public assistance but now operate businesses and create jobs, to women transitioning from employee to small business employer, to established women-business owners who create and manufacture products for sale at home and abroad. The Centers nurture women entrepreneurs through business and financial planning and help with critical issues like securing funding for startup and expansion. Yet—despite these successes—funding questions have long plagued the program.

I am committed to resolving the temporary funding crisis through the bill I introduce today and will work with my colleagues to ensure the long-term viability of the Women's Business Center program for today's women entrepreneurs and those of tomorrow.

Mr. KERRY. Mr. President, I rise today as Ranking Member of the Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship with my esteemed colleague and Chair of the Committee, Senator SNOWE, to offer legislation to fix a funding gap that exists for meritorious Women's Business Centers that are graduating from the first stage of the program and entering the sustainability portion.

I would first like to thank Senator SNOWE for working very closely with me on this issue. Her leadership and support has been invaluable. I would also like to thank our House counterparts on the Small Business Committee, Chairman MANZULLO and Ranking Member VELÁZQUEZ, who have also been working diligently on the issue of sustainability grants as we take on the process of reauthorizing the majority of the SBA's programs. In addition, I want to thank all of the cosponsors of this legislation, all of which have shown resounding support for women entrepreneurs and recognize the positive impact all small businesses have on our national economy.

As I have said on more than one occasion, women business owners do not get the recognition they deserve for their contribution to our economy: Eighteen million Americans would be without jobs today if it weren't for